

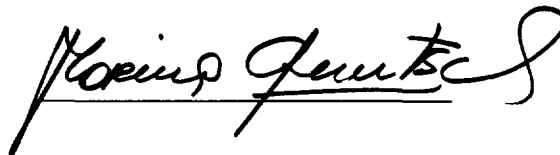
Selected Poems of Rosario Castellanos in Translation

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marina Guntsche". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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Purpose of Thesis

The work of Mexican poet Rosario Castellanos is not particularly well-known in the English-speaking world. This thesis project, although mainly intended as an exercise in literary translation, has as a secondary aim the increased exposure of Castellanos' work. Fifteen pieces of varying lengths were selected, both previously published and unpublished in English. A critical introduction to the life and work of Castellanos is included, as well as a brief discussion of translation theory, issues encountered during the translation process, and translation methodology and selection rationale. The introduction is followed by the translations, accompanied by their Spanish-language originals.

Acknowledgements

Although the main work for this thesis was completed over the course of a semester, the seeds of it were planted several years ago. It has thus been a project long in the making, and many have contributed their energy and faith to it.

My sincere thanks must first be given to my advisor, Dr. Marina Guntsche, whose early enthusiasm for my beginning forays into translation first led me to consider doing a project such as this. She, along with Dr. Linda-Jane Barnette, must also be thanked for introducing me to Rosario Castellanos in their honors colloquium on Hispanic women writers. Dr. Guntsche was honest, thoughtful and supportive throughout the translation process, leading me to reconsider my poetics as well as my grammar. Her help was invaluable, and I am truly grateful.

Thanks are also due to Molly Warnes Schaller, Jenn Parker, and particularly Fred Johnson, whose support, encouragement, and friendship helped guide me through the sea of a trying year. I am constantly reminded how blessed I am to know them.

I also would like to express my gratitude to my family, part of my personal process from beginning to end. They are always with me.

Finally, I should thank Rosario herself. Her words have constantly been an inspiration. I have really only been a medium for her spirit; without her, this project would not exist.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, Robert William Tarrance, Jr., who helped teach me the value of love and a good book. I'd like to believe he watches over me still. I miss you, Grandpa.

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Introduction

Rosario Castellanos was born in Mexico City in 1925, the daughter of a wealthy *hacendero* and school principal, and a mother born into a family of seamstresses. Her parents were an unusual match, crossing a significant border between social classes; it was also a difficult one. The Castellanos family was descended from Spanish conquerors, and as such enjoyed a privileged status in Comitán, Chiapas, where Castellanos spent most of her childhood on and near the family's ranch. As was common among wealthy families, Castellanos and her younger brother, Benjamín, were turned over to an Indian nurse for care and rarely had contact with their parents; this provided Castellanos with her first glimpses of the condition of Mexico's native people. As a child, however, Castellanos was not yet the Indian advocate she would become in her adulthood, for her relations to the family's Indian servants were strictly one of master to servant.

In spite of being the eldest child, Castellanos was not as prized as her only brother, the heir to the family fortune. Upon Benjamín's untimely death, Castellanos gained some importance as the only surviving child, but it was clear that her mother, at least, wished it had been Rosario who had died and not Benjamín. Overwhelmed by her parents' response to her brother's death, and haunted by guilt for once childishly wishing him so, Castellanos began to write at an early age. She was later to speak of her childhood loneliness and her attempts to take refuge in literature (O'Connell 14). As a profession, however, literature was considered dubious at best, especially for women, and her obsession with it was thought by her parents to be slightly dangerous.

Castellanos' adolescence may have remained quite provincial, but the course of her life was significantly altered in 1941, when the government-ordered redistribution of *hacienda* lands caused the loss of her family's holdings. The family moved to Mexico City, where Castellanos was allowed to continue her education past high school due to the fact she was the sole heir. Despite the devaluation of her family's social standing, Castellanos was able to attend one of the

best preparatory schools in Mexico City, as well as continue her studies at university. According to Oscar Bonifaz, Castellanos' mother also encouraged her daughter to prepare for a career as an alternative to marriage because of her own troubled experiences (21). Castellanos enrolled originally in a thoroughly practical course of study in law, but later switched to philosophy. Throughout her studies, Castellanos continued to write, although her pursuit was still frowned upon by her parents.

At university, Castellanos became part of what became known in literary circles as "The Eight" (and, later, the "Generation of '50"), a group of writers including Dolores Castro, Alejandro Avilés, Efrén Hernández, Octavio Novaro, Roberto Cabral del Hoya, Javier Peñalosa, and Honorato Ignacio Magalóni. Later, Jaime Sabines, Miguel Guardia, Luisa Josefina Hernández, Sergio Magaña and Emilio Carballido also became part of the group. Castellanos' work was greatly affected by her interaction with these other authors, but it was not until the death of both of her parents in early 1948 that she became free to pursue literature as a profession. Her first published poems appeared in 1948 in a Chiapas newspaper, *Acción*, and later that year she also published her first major poetic works, the long poems *Trayectoria del Polvo* and *Apuntes para una declaración de fe*.

Once liberated from her parents' expectations, Castellanos threw herself into literature, publishing novels, essays, and collections of poetry throughout the 1950's and '60's. 1950 brought her graduation with a master of philosophy degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and the publication of her thesis, *Sobre cultura femenina*. Although her ideas would come to change later in her life, this work still stands as an important examination of women and writing and a key document of Latin American feminism (O'Connell 21). Castellanos also won a scholarship for study in Europe and published two additional poetic works: *De la vigilia esteril* and *Dos poemas*. Importantly, she returned to Chiapas, where she served in various positions for the Chiapenecan Institute of Arts and Sciences, the National Indian Institute, and the Guñol Theater. No doubt her work in Chiapas was, as Joanna O'Connell states, "impelled by a sense of debt" which her family owed to the Mayan people who

had worked her family's lands (21). Regardless of the initial motivation, her contact with the native population greatly influenced her writing, especially her fiction; in the *indios*, she recognized a pattern of dominator and dominated which, as a woman in an extremely patriarchal society, she knew firsthand (Allgood xxi). Her work in Chiapas also is considered to mark the beginning of her involvement in the *indigenismo* movement, and, indeed, much of her fiction is classed in this genre.

In spite of a bout with tuberculosis, Castellanos continued to publish heavily. During the 1950's, her reputation grew rapidly. Between 1950 and 1958, when she was awarded the Chiapas Prize for her first novel, *Balún-Canán*, Castellanos published three poetic works, her master's essay, a novel (and was well underway in the construction of another), and was at work on short stories and short dramatic pieces. Besides winning the Chiapas Prize, Castellanos in 1958 married philosophy professor Ricardo Guerra; they would divorce in 1971. Their son Gabriel was born in 1962, on the same night in which Castellanos was awarded the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize for Literature for *Ciudad Real*, a collection of short fiction.

1959 brought the publication of more poetry: the collection *Al pie de la letra* and two dramatic pieces, *Salomé* and *Judith*. The 1960's, however, marked a change in Castellanos' poetry as well as the additional growth of her reputation. Castellanos published only two books of poetry during the decade, *Lívica luz* in 1960 and *Materia memorable* in 1969 (though she also brought out a novel, two collections of short stories, and a collection of essays). In these two books of poetry, we can see her move away from a highly stylized form relying heavily on myth and an idealized poetics (discussed further below). By 1969, Castellanos was well-established in her role as wife, mother, and author, and her poetry reflects a strong, independent voice. It is much of this later poetry which is frequently translated, perhaps because her tone can be seen as increasingly feminist. Besides her poetry, Castellanos also wrote essays for the newspaper *Excelsior*, taught at university, and began to take on a more political role. Named Mexico's Woman of the Year in 1967, she shortly thereafter became Mexico's delegate to the Latin American Writers' Conclave in 1969.

In 1971, Castellanos received one of the highest honors available to Latin American authors, becoming Mexico's ambassador to Israel. Because we as Americans come from a culture where the position of artist and politician does not often mix, we often find perplexing the Latin American custom of appointing cultural leaders to positions of political leadership. In Latin America, however, it is often felt that there is no better representative of one's country and culture than one who moves and shapes that culture through his/her art. Artists there can receive a status not usually given to artists north of the border, and Castellanos' appointment to the ambassadorship clearly demonstrates her status in Mexico.

As a political and cultural representative of her country, Castellanos taught university students, gave lectures, and continued to publish. *Álbum de familia*, another short story collection, was published in 1971, followed in 1972 by a collected edition of her poetry, *Poesía no eres tu*, and *Mujer que sabe latín*, additional collected essays, in 1973. In her work of this period she writes vividly and explicitly about the state of women and of language; her voice has become confident and true. Tragically, this assured voice was cut short when Castellanos was accidentally electrocuted while in Israel in 1974. She was buried in the Rotunda of Illustrious Men in Mexico City, an honor Castellanos would most likely have found ironic.

Like most artists, Castellanos spent the majority of her career in search of an efficient means of expression, in search of a voice both true to herself and to her subject matter. Her struggle, made all the more difficult by the particularly patriarchal culture of her native country, is most clearly demonstrated in her poetry. When viewed chronologically, her poems demonstrate a clear progression from a relatively stylized form reliant on myth, imagery and a detached viewpoint, to first an almost confessional and then distinctly autobiographical poetics filled with candid first-person narration, wit, and irony.

The early collections of poems, predating 1959's *Al pie de la letra*, feature long, lyrical lines and rely heavily on Biblical figures and pre-Colombian legend. Castellanos writes short poems about Indian washerwomen and Mayan artifacts, and in poems such as "*Silencio cerca de una piedra antigua*," looks toward an ancient past as a means for expression, a method described

by both O'Connell and Adrienne Rich as a "re-vision" of tradition in order to discover a new relation to both language and the past (O'Connell 12-13).

Additionally, Castellanos' poetic language is filled with imagery and to a degree dependent on metaphor. An excellent example of this stage in her work is "*Lamentación del Dido*," in which Castellanos adopts the persona of Dido. Dido herself becomes an archetype; she is transfigured, as Castellanos would later do with Salomé and Judith, into both representation and subject. Dido is both the teller of a story and the story itself, literature and life (Alarcón 150). Her lament demonstrates Castellanos' method of coming to terms with the past and addressing the present through the use of persona; she is not yet comfortable enough to (or able to) confront history and society head-on.

Toward the end of the 1950's and into the early 1960's, a dramatic change occurs in Castellanos' poetry. Her language becomes more concrete as she relies less on legend or persona to carry her message. The poetic line becomes shorter, and we begin to see the appearance of "*el otro*," the "other" with which much of her thought becomes concerned. At times the *otro* is woman, at others it is the *indio*, and in still other cases, the *otro* is merely the existence of one outside the self. O'Connell argues that "...casting either the colonized or the female as 'other' is an ideological move" concealing historical oppression (12), and this line of thought would seem to be a natural outgrowth of Castellanos' early heavy reliance on history.

Although she still makes use of the persona (in pieces like the dramatic poems *Salomé* and *Judith*) and myth (as in "*Última crónica*"), Castellanos moves toward the confessional in pieces like "*Presencia*." Here, too, she writes increasingly in first-person, even when she is not intentionally adopting a persona. It is of course dangerous to immediately assume that the poet is also the "I" of the poem, but within the context of Castellanos' poetic development, it seems safe, in most cases, to do so. As Castellanos grew more confident in her abilities and more dissatisfied with the cultural binds and figures of which she made use (and was used by), she grew more confident in speaking directly to her audience.

Issues of Translation

In spite of her popularity south of the border, Castellanos is not much recognized by native speakers of English. For the vast majority of the public, names like Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, and Gabriel Garcia Márquez spring to mind much more easily when one thinks of "Latin-American" literature. Part of this is perhaps due to Castellanos' sex, but her native language may also play a part; the United States is known for its devaluation of the Spanish language and the related racism and xenophobia. As the language is subordinated, so to is the thinking contained in that language, believes Amy Kaminsky (1). Kaminsky additionally argues that gender differences in the languages themselves (in combination, I believe, with differing cultural constructions) exacerbate problems of translation and therefore public awareness of certain literatures. These are not issues to be taken lightly, which is why I mention them here, but discussion of them could form an entire essay in its own right. Keeping this in mind, this section will simply discuss existing translations of Castellanos' work, focusing of course on her poetry, and my selection rationale for the translated poems which follow.

Castellanos' fiction was perhaps the first of her works to be brought into English. Each of her novels (and many of her short stories) has been translated at least once. Indeed, the translation of her other works seems to have followed interest in her novels. Maureen Ahern is the foremost translator of Castellanos; *A Rosario Castellanos Reader*, which contains selected essays, plays, and short fiction as well as poetry translated by Ahern, is often considered the premiere existing collection of Castellanos's works in English. Magda Bogin has also contributed significantly in exposing Castellanos to an American audience. Her work, most of which is collected in *The Selected Poems of Rosario Castellanos*, has helped to bring some of Castellanos' lesser-known poems to the forefront. Finally, Myralyn F. Allgood has also contributed to the translation of Castellanos; her *Another Way to Be: Selected Works of Rosario Castellanos* contains an excellent selection of poetry, fiction, and essays.

In spite of the magnificent work accomplished by Ahern, Bogin, and Allgood, the majority of Castellanos' poetry remains unknown in English. Too often the poems that have 'crossed over' are those which maintain strongly feminist themes; "*Se habla de Gabriel*," "*Meditación en el umbral*," "*Jornada de la Soltera*," and "*Dos poemas*" are only a few examples. Although they are all fine poems, they present only one side of Castellanos as a poet or, indeed, as a woman. Her poems are more than traditionally "feminist." The scope of her poetics is so rich and deep, covering religion and philosophy, history and myth, the difficulties of being a woman and the difficulties of being a writer, that to merely focus on the feminist aspects of her work and her language is to ignore a significant key to the rest of her work and her life. As feminist literary criticism moves beyond its initial fascination with all things female (or the lack of the female), so too must mature the view of Castellanos and her work. Exposure of additional works will enhance understanding of Castellanos as a person as well as of her work itself, and will enable the English speaking world to come to terms with what Mexico has already realized: that Castellanos is a major force in twentieth-century Latin-American literature.

The growth of feminist criticism has been to a large degree responsible for Castellanos' growing recognition among North American literary circles and, as mentioned above, has greatly influenced the selection of certain poems for translation. I have thus tried to steer away from the more well-known of her poems, for they have been quite skillfully translated (often more than once). Instead, I have attempted to choose poems which, although many do have feminist themes, go beyond the categorization of Castellanos' writing as merely 'feminist.' Many of those I have selected deal with the difficulties of language and the definition of identity. Others demonstrate the concern with and influences of native culture and myths which have often been an essential element of her fiction. All of the poems feature an established, insightful voice which seemed to speak directly to me as I read them.

New to the English language, to the best of my knowledge, are "*Amor*," "*Charla*," "*Diálogos con los hombres más honrados*," "*Nacimiento*," "*Recital*," "*Telenovela*," "*Tres poemas*," "*Última crónica*," and *Salomé*, one of a set of dramatic poems. These comprise

approximately half of the poems translated here; the others I selected have previously appeared in print in English. Of these, "*Parábola de la inconstante*" and "*Muro de lamentaciones*" are perhaps the most well-known. Both are powerful pieces and challenging to translate effectively. I chose them not so much out of a desire to improve upon existing translations than out of a desire to put myself to the challenge; these two pieces speak to me so strongly in their Spanish originals that I wished to see if I could convey that in English.

The final four poems with which I worked ("*Pasaporte*," "*Entrevista de prensa*," "*Epitafio del hipócrita*," and "*Apelación al solitario*") appear in the fine anthology edited by Julian Palley, *Meditación en el umbral*. Although a bilingual edition of this collection does exist, poems such as these four are not widely known. They exhibit Castellanos' somewhat sardonic humor as well as deal with the recurring themes of language, identity, and solitude that appear throughout her work. I believe they are deserving of a wider audience.

The final poem in this series of translations is one of a set of two dramatic poems written by Castellanos which were published during the 1950's. In *Salomé* (as well as its counterpart, *Judith*) Castellanos takes the Biblical figures of these two women and eloquently renews their stories. *Salomé's* setting is an Indian uprising during the regime of the nineteenth-century Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz. By deliberately placing this story in time, Castellanos is able to address both the condition of women and Indians. Although fictively placed more than fifty years before the date of the poem's creation, the conditions which Castellanos examines remained an imperative issue. However, during the 1950's, Castellanos' voice and poetics had not evolved to the point where she could address these issues head-on, from a first-person viewpoint; she instead chose, as she did with many early poems, to use an established, traditional style and to speak through myth. *Salomé* is skillfully crafted, and as a dramatic poem, created its own set of translation problems.

Translation Methodology

There are a number of excellent works devoted to the subject of translation theory and practice; however, quite a few of them require a fairly advanced knowledge of linguistics. Rather than focusing specifically on linguistic theories of translation, I was drawn instead to those works which emphasized the practice of translation and the unique problems of Spanish/English translation. One of the most helpful was Jack Child's *Introduction to Spanish Translation*, which combines introductory linguistic theory with lessons on particular problems and grammatical constructions. Newmark's *Introduction to Translation* also provided me with insights into the complex levels of meaning inherent in any construction of language.

I learned the most about the translation process, however, by simply doing the work. Translation begins with reading and analysis, for before one can begin working in the target language, the nuances of the source language, as well as the author's intent, must be understood. So I began each translation with repeated close readings, keeping an eye out for potential trouble spots, and soon thereafter created a first draft. These first drafts were often very literal and, though perhaps true to the Spanish phrasing, did not sound natural in English. Successive drafts followed, after consultation with Dr. Guntsche regarding grammatical and poetic issues, and each was checked against the original to ensure that the deep meaning of the poem was not altered. A translation, I discovered, soon takes on a life of its own, and it can be difficult to remain true to the author's poetics.

This faithfulness to the original is one of the major concerns of the field; Child quotes a saying from the French which addresses exactly this: "translations are like lovers: the faithful are not beautiful and the beautiful are not faithful" (26). He thus creates a "Beautiful-Faithful Matrix" of four stages: the beautiful and faithful, the beautiful and unfaithful, the ugly and the faithful, and the ugly and unfaithful (26). The ideal stage is, of course, the first--a translation which is both beautiful and faithful to the original. In translating poetry, where the language and

phrasing of the original was so carefully chosen, decisions regarding the appropriate target language equivalent are often difficult. The metaphoric nature of poetry itself also creates difficulty. For these reasons, it is important that the author's intent is thoroughly understood and his/her diction analyzed thoroughly so appropriate choices can be made for the translation.

I have aimed to be as faithful to Castellanos' language and meaning as possible, while also striving to create a natural, flowing line in English. With the exception of a few lines of Salomé, Castellanos uses no rhyme scheme, so I fortunately did not have to take that into consideration and was in most cases able to keep the natural line. However, there are some cases in which maintaining the original line construction would make the line seem forced or unnatural; in these cases I have bowed to my poetic sensibilities and adjusted the phrasing appropriately while attempting to keep the tone of Castellanos' original--not an easy task, indeed.

Above all, I have tried to create a translation which would be poetic in its own right. As a poet, I find I made many of these decisions intuitively, and just as I feel in regards to my own poetry, I also find I am rarely satisfied. Translations, perhaps more so than original poetry, are works in progress. I can only say that, at this point in time, these particular versions are as beautiful and as faithful as I could make them, and it is my hope that Castellanos' voice still rings clear and true.

Charla

. . .porque la realidad es reducible
a los últimos signos
y se pronuncia en sólo una palabra. . .

Sonríe el otro y bebe de su vaso.
Mira pasar las nubes altas del mediodía
y se siente asediado (bugambilia, jazmín,
rosal, dalias, geranios,
flores que en cada pétalo van diciendo una sílaba
de color y fragancia)
por un jardín de idioma inagotable.

Speak

. . .because reality is reducible,
ultimately, to signs,
and is pronounced in only one word. . .

The other smiles and sips from a glass.
Watches the passage of tall midday clouds
and feels bothered (bougainvillea, jasmine,
roses, dahlias, geraniums,
flowers of which each petal is speaking a syllable
of color and fragrance)
by a garden of inexhaustible language.

Tres poemas

I.

¿Qué hay más débil que un dios? Gime hambriento y husmea
la sangre de la víctima
y come sacrificios y busca las entrañas
de lo creado, para hundir en ellas
sus cien dientes rapaces.

(Un dios. O ciertos hombres que tienen un destino.)

Cada día amanece
y el mundo es nuevamente devorado.

II.

Los ojos del gran pez nunca se cierran.
No duerme. Siempre mira (¿a quién?, ¿a dónde?),
en su universo claro y sin sonido.

Alguna vez su corazón, que late
tan cerca de una espina, dice: quiero.

Y el gran pez, que devora
y pesa y tiñe el agua con su ira
y se mueve con nervios de relámpago,
nada puede, ni aun cerrar los ojos.

Y más allá de los cristales, mira.

III.

Ay, la nube que quiere ser la flecha del cielo
o la aureola de Dios o el puño del relámpago.

Y a cada aire su forma cambia y se desvanece
y cada viento arrastra su rumbo y lo extravía.

Deshilachado harapo, vellón sucio,
sin entraña, sin fuerza, nada, nube.

Three Poems

I.

What is more feeble than a god? It wails, starving,
smelling the blood of a victim,
eats sacrifices and hunts for the entrails
of the created, in order to sink its hundred
rapacious teeth into them.

(A god. Or certain men who have a destiny).

Each day dawns
and the world is once again devoured.

II.

The eyes of the great fish never close.
It does not sleep. It always watches (where? for whom?)
in its bright and soundless universe.

Some time its heart, beating
so close to the spine, says: I want.

And the great fish, which devours
and weighs heavily, tinges the water with its rage
and moves with nerves of lightning,
can do nothing, not even close its eyes.

And beyond the crystals, watches.

III.

Oh, the cloud that wants to be an arrow in the sky
or the halo of God, or a shaft of lightning.

And at each draft its form changes and it disappears;
each wind blows to its own direction and misleads it.

Frayed rag, dirty fleece
without substance, without force, nothing, cloud.

Telenovela

El sitio que dejó vacante Homero,
el centro que ocupaba Scherezada
(o antes de la invención del lenguaje, el lugar
en que se congregaba la gente de la tribu
para escuchar al fuego)
ahora está ocupado por la Gran Caja Idiota

Los hermanos olvidan sus rencillas
y fraternizan en el mismo sofá; señora y sierva
declaran abolidas diferencias de clase
y ahora son algo más que iguales: cómplices.

La muchacha abandona
el balcón que le sirve de vitrina
para exhibir disponibilidades
y hasta el padre renuncia a la partida
de dominó y pospone
los otros vergonzantes merodeos nocturnos.

Porque aquí, en la pantalla, una enfermera
se enfrenta con la esposa frívola del doctor
y le dicta una cátedra
en que habla de moral profesional
y las interferencias de la vida privada.

Porque una viuda cose hasta perder la vista
para costear el baile de su hija quinceañera
que se avergüenza de ella y de su sacrificio
y la hace figurar como a una criada.

Porque una novia espera al que se fue;
porque una intrigante urde mentiras;
porque se falsifica un testamento;
porque una soltera da un mal paso
y no acierta a ocultar las consecuencias.

Pero también porque la debutante
ahuyenta a todos con su mal aliento.
Porque la lavandera entona una aleluya
en loor del poderoso detergente.
Porque el amor está garantizado
por un desodorante
y una marca especial de cigarrillos
y hay que brindar por él con alguna bebida
que nos hace felices y distintos.

Y hay que comprar, comprar, comprar, comprar.
Porque compra es sinónimo de orgasmo,
porque compra es igual que beatitud,
porque el que compra se hace semejante a los dioses.

No hay en ello herejía.
Porque en la concepción y en la creación del hombre
se usó como elemento la carencia.
Se hizo de él un ser menesteroso,
una criatura a la que le hace falta
lo grande y lo pequeño.

Y el secreto teológico, el murmullo
murmurado al oído del poeta,
la discusión del aula del filósofo
es ahora potestad del publicista.

Como dijimos antes no hay nada malo en ello.
Se está siguiendo un orden natural
y recurriendo a su canal idóneo.

Cuando el programa acaba
la reunión se disuelve.
Cada uno va a su cuarto
mascullando un--apenas--"buenas noches".

Y duerme. Y tiene hermosos sueños prefabricados.

Soap Opera

The space which Homer permitted vacant,
the center which Scherezade occupied
(or before the invention of language, the place
where the people of the tribe came together
to listen to the fire)
is now occupied by the Grand Idiot Box.

Brothers forget their arguments
and fraternize on the same sofa; mistress and servant
declare class differences abolished
and now they are something more than equals: accomplices.

The girl abandons
the balcony which serves as a showcase
for exhibiting her resources
and the father renounces the game
of dominoes and postpones
other shameful nocturnal snoopings.

Because here, on the screen, a patient
comes face to face with the frivolous doctor's wife
and lectures her
speaking of professional ethics
and interferences in private life.

Because a widow sews until she has lost her sight
in order to pay for her daughter's quinceañera
a daughter who is embarrassed by her and her sacrifice
and makes her look like a servant.

Because a girlfriend waits for one who has gone;
because an intriguer plots deceptions;
because a testimony is falsified;
because a spinster takes a bad step
and does not succeed in hiding the consequences.

But also because the debutante
frightens all with her bad breath.
Because the washerwoman intones a hallelujah
in praise of a powerful detergent.
Because love is guaranteed
by a deodorant
and a special brand of cigarettes
and there's a toast for it with some drink
which makes us happy and distinct.

And there must be buying, buying, buying, buying.
Because buying is synonymous with orgasm,
because purchasing is equal to beatitude,
because he who buys is made similar to gods.

There is no heresy in it.
Because in the conception and the creation of man
deficiency was used as an ingredient.
He was made a needy being,
a creature who lacks
the significant and the small.

And the theological secret, the murmur
whispered in the hearing of the poet,
the classroom discussion of the philosopher,
is now authority of the publicist.

As we said before there is nothing bad in it.
It's following a natural order
and is turning to its suitable channel.

When the program ends
the gathering dissolves.
Each one returns to his quarters
mumbling--scarcely--a "good night."

And each sleeps. And has splendid prefabricated dreams.

Nacimiento

Estuvo aquí. Ninguno (y él menos que ninguno)
supo quién era, cómo, por qué, adónde.

Decía las palabras que los otros entienden
--las suyas no llegó a escucharlas nunca--;
se escondía en el lugar en que los otros buscan,
en su casa, en su cuerpo, en sus edades,
y sin embargo ausente siempre y mudo.

Como todos fue dueño de su vida
una hora o más y luego abrió las manos.

Entonces preguntaron: ¿era hermoso?
Ya nadie recordaba aquella superficie
que la luz disputó por alumbrar
y le fue arrebatada tantas veces.

Le inventaron acciones, intenciones. Y tuvo
una historia, un destino, un epitafio.

Y fue, por fin, un hombre.

Birth

He was here. No one (and he the least of all)
knew who he was, how, why, where.

He spoke words which others understood
--his own he never could hear--
he hid himself in the very place where others searched,
in his house, in his body, in his ages,
ever still absent and mute.

Like all he was master of his own life
an hour or more, and then he opened his hands.

Then they asked: was he beautiful?
Almost no one remembered such a surface,
which struggled with light for illumination
and was snatched back so many times.

They invented for him actions, intentions. And he had
a history, a destiny, an epitaph.

And he was, at last, a man.

Recital

El poeta se arregla la corbata
y sube al escenario.
Carraspea un poco. Tiembla. Es natural.
Pero se sobrepone porque Apolo
le ha infundido el divino valor, lo ha emborrachado
de vaticinios y helo aquí, en el centro
de un gran espacio oscuro
¿y vacío? ¿Y vacío?

Esta interrogación
es como para recobrar la lucidez,
así que sin más trámites, profiere:

"Señoras y señores. . .El micrófono
funciona bien. ¿Se escucha? ¿Quién escucha?
¿Uno? ¿Varios? ¿Ninguno?
No me importa.
La sordera no es lo que hace el silencio.
Lo que hace el silencio es la mudez.

Y no quiero ser cómplice
de ese crimen contra la humanidad.
Porque sin la palabra nadie es el hombre, nada
distinto de la piedra. En el cosmos entero
un dios puso en sus labios el sello de exención.
Y el poeta es quien da voz a lo que no habla,
es el que. . ."

reflectores, de repente, se encienden
y el que declama mira a su auditorio.

Son seres que enarbolan como escudo
esa señal de tránsito que prohíbe los ruidos
en la proximidad de un hospital.
Están lisiados todos. El estruendo
les reventó los tímpanos.
El estruendo de la hélice; del motor en la fábrica;
de las sirenas de la policía;
el de la multitud en el box, en los toros;
el de la noche de los linchamientos;
el de las campanadas y las vivas
al conductor de masas;
el del anuncio del mejor producto;
el de la propaganda de la mejor política;
el del oro cayendo en cataratas
hasta las cajas de seguridad;
el de la bomba al estallar; el de
la jauría de perros amaestrados
para cazar a un paria fugitivo.

El poeta se quita la corbata
--pues no tiene corona de laurel--
la pisotea, mientras maldice a Apolo
y, sobrio ya, desciende
y busca en la luneta algún sitio sin dueño.
Nadie lo mira. Nadie le regala
el cartelón. Ninguno le sonríe.
Pero el poeta se entrega
a las delicias del anonimato.
¡Oh, qué maravillosa sensación!
Se está tan bien así, confundido entre muchos,
rodeado de estruendos, protegido
por los estruendos y con la membrana
del tímpano ya a punto de estallar.

Ahora, canción inoportuna, prueba
a saltar la muralla.
¿Verdad que no se puede venir a perturbar
a los tranquilos? ¡Fuera!
Te arrojan con la música a otra parte.

No hay gemido de víctimas. No hay clamor de justicia.
No hay ulular de fieras.
¡Cómo, si es inaudible
aun el estruendo de la tempestad!
¿Murmillos? Ratonzuelos que roen la madera.
Nada importante. Nadie. Por fin estoy a salvo.

Recital

The poet straightens his tie
and climbs the stage.
Clears his throat a little. Trembles. It's natural.
But he pulls himself together because Apollo
has instilled in him divine courage, has intoxicated him
with prophecies, and here he is, in the center
of a grand and obscure space,
and empty? and empty?

This questioning
is to recover clarity,
so without many procedures, he utters:

"Ladies and gentlemen. . . The microphone
works well. Do you hear me? Who can hear?
One? A few? No one?
No matter.
Deafness is not what makes silence.
Dumbness makes silence.

And I don't want to be an accomplice
in that crime against humanity.
Because without the word, no one is human, is no
different than a rock. In the entire universe
a god put in his lips the seal of exemption.
And the poet is he who gives voice to that which cannot speak,
is he who. . ."

spotlights, suddenly, lit
and the speaker gazes at his audience.

There are beings who hoist like a shield
the posted sign forbidding sounds
near a hospital.
All are injured. The crash
explodes their timpani.
The crash of the spiral; of the factory engine,
the police sirens,
of the uproar of the crowds in the boxing ring, in bullfights,
during the night of the lynching;
of the peals of the bell and the cheers
for the leader of the masses;
of the announcement of the best product;
of the propaganda of a leading politician;
of gold falling in cascades
into safety-deposit boxes;
of the bomb when it explodes, of the
pack of dogs trained
to hunt a fugitive pariah.

The poet removes his tie
--for he has no laurel wreath--
tramples it while cursing Apollo
and, already sober, descends
and searches for an empty seat.
No one looks. No one gives him
the sign. No one smiles at him.
But the poet gives in
to the sweetness of anonymity.
What a marvellous sensation!
One feels best like this, lost among many,
surrounded by the uproar, protected
by the din, even with the timpani
membrane stretched almost to breaking.

Now, inopportune song, prove you
can scale the wall.
Isn't it true that you can't come to disturb
the tranquil ones? Get out!
With music they hurl you elsewhere.

There is no groan from the victims. There is no clamour for justice.
There is no shriek of beasts.
How come, if even the crash of the tempest
is almost inaudible!
Murmurs? Gross rats which gnaw wood.
Nothing important. No one. Finally I am out of danger.

Amor

Sólo la voz, la piel, la superficie
pulida de las cosas.

Basta. No quiere más la oreja, que su cuenco
rebalsaría y la mano ya no alcanza
a tocar más allá.
Distraída, resbala, acariciando
y lentamente sabe del contorno.
Se retira saciada,
sin advertir el ulular inútil
de la cautividad de las entrañas
ni el ímpetu del cuajo de la sangre
que embiste la compuerta del borbotón, ni el nudo
ya para siempre ciego del sollozo.

El que se va se lleva su memoria,
su modo de ser río, de ser aire,
de ser adiós y nunca.

Hasta que un día otro lo para, lo detiene
y lo reduce a voz, a piel, a superficie
ofrecida, entregada, mientras dentro de sí
la oculta soledad aguarda y tiembla.

Love

Only voice, skin, the polished
surface of things.

Enough. The ear does not want more, for its hollow
may overflow and the hand can no longer reach
very far to touch.
Absentminded, it slides, caressing,
and slowly knows the contour.
It retires satisfied
without noticing the futile howl
of a heart in captivity
nor the congealing impetus of the blood
which assaults the bubbling floodgate, nor the forever blind
knot of a sob.

That which goes carries his memory,
his way of being river, of being air
of being farewell and never.

Until one day another stops him, delays him
and reduces him to voice, skin, to a surface
offered, surrendered, while inside himself
the hidden solitude waits and trembles.

Apelación al solitario

Es necesario, a veces, encontrar compañía.

Amigo, no es posible ni nacer ni morir
sin con otro. Es bueno
que la amistad le quite
al trabajo esa cara de castigo
y a la alegría ese aire ilícito de robo.

¿Cómo podrías estar solo a la hora
completa, en que las cosas y tú hablan y hablan,
hasta el amanecer?

Appeal to the Solitary One

It's necessary, at times, to find company.

My friend, it's not possible to be born or to die
without another. It's good
that friendship removes
from work the appearance of punishment
and from happiness the illicit air of theft.

How could you be alone at that complete
hour, in which you talk and talk with things
until the dawn?

Epitafio del hipócrita

Quería y no quería.
Quería con su piel y con sus uñas,
con lo que cambia y cae; negaba con sus vísceras,
con lo que de sus vísceras no era aserrín, con todo
lo que latía y sangraba en sus entrañas.

Quería ser él y el otro.
Siamés partido a la mitad, buscaba
la columna de hueso para asirse, colgar
su cartilaginosa consistencia de hiedra.

Mesón desocupado,
actor, daba hospedaje al agonista.
Gesticulaba viendo su sombra en las paredes,
deglutía palabras sin sabor, eructaba
resonando en su vasta oquedad de tambor.

Ensayaba ademanes
--heroico, noble, prócer--
para que al desbordarse la lava del elogio
lo cubriera cuajando después en una estatua.

No a solas ¡nunca a solas!
dijo el brindis final,
alzó la copa amarga de cicuta.

(Mas no bebió su muerte sino la del espejo).

Epitaph of a Hypocrite

He wanted and he did not want.
He wanted with his skin and with his nails,
with that which changes and falls; he denied with his guts,
with all of his gut that was not sawdust, with all
that throbbed and bled in his entrails!

He wanted to be him and another.
Siamese twins parted in the middle, he searched
the column of bone to seize it, to hang
his cartilage like the consistency of ivy.

Empty inn,
an actor, he gave lodging to the agonized.
He gestured, watching his shadow on the walls,
swallowed words without flavor, belched
resounding in his vast drum hollow.

He tested gestures
--heroic, noble, illustrious--
so as to be overcome by the lava of praise
covering him, congealing afterward into a statue.

Not alone, never alone!
He said the final toast,
raised the bitter glass of hemlock.

(But he did not drink his death, rather that of the mirror).

Última crónica

Cuando cumplí la edad, las condiciones,
alcancé el privilegio.
Fui invitada a asistir al rito inmemorial,
a ese culto secreto en el que se renueva
la sangre ya caduca,
en que se vivifican las deidades,
en que el árbol se cubre de retoños.

Entré en el templo de los sacrificios
y vi a los ayudantes del sacerdote máximo
raspar antiguas costras desteñidas
que mancillaban la pared y el suelo;
pulir la piedra del altar, volverla
el espejo perfecto que duplica los actos
y les confiere así doble valor.

Los presenciantes, mudos
(¿de miedo
o ya de reverencia?)
aguardaban temblando, con la mirada fija
en la llamada puerta del escarnio.

De allí saldría la víctima.

¿Quién será?, pregunté. Y un iniciado
me respondió: la nombran
de muchos modos y es siempre la misma.

¡Oh, no!, clamé. ¡Piedad! Porque sentí
removida la tumba de mis muertos,
la ceniza del héroe dispersada,
turbada la vigilia
del hombre que contempla las estrellas,
interrumpido el sueño del que sueña
el porvenir; desperdigadas, rotas
las palabras que un día se congregaron
alrededor de un orden hermoso y verdadero.

¿Qué ultraje van a hacerle a esa criatura inerme?

Es lo único que cambia, me indicaron.
No se repetirá ninguno que haya sido
consumado otra vez.

El himen desgarrado fue la hazaña
del rudo semental y de ella hemos nacido
tú, yo, nosotros, los que atestiguamos
y los que permanecen en la orilla.

Después llegaron los mutiladores,
los chalanes que fueron a venderla
al mercader de esclavas.

Fue saqueada mil veces; fue aherrojada
en calabozos húmedos
que algún tumulto derribó y caudillos
bárbaramente tiernos y feroces.

¿Quién sobrevive? Nadie más que ella,
la indestructible. A cada cierto plazo
desciende hasta nosotros y se ostenta,
siempre bajo una máscara distinta,
para probar su legitimidad
y exigir homenajes y tributos.

Así no haya temor.
Las ceremonias ya no serán cruentas.

Expectante, la vi salir: desnuda,
más, más, más, desollada.
Y sin ojos, sin tacto,
pero como quien sabe su camino,
se dirigió guiada por nadie, sostenida
por nadie, hasta el lugar
único y preparado.

El sacerdote máximo le tomó la cabeza
--no para cercenarla
sino para verter en ella ungüentos,
mixturas de las hierbas más salvajes.

Algo dijo en su oído, que no escuché. Un conjuro,
algo que se repite y se repite
hasta hacerse obediencia.

Después, amigos míos, os suplico,
no dudéis de mi lengua,
no dudéis de la mano con que escribo
y no pongáis en tela de juicio lo que juro.

Vi la metamorfosis. Nuestra dueña,
desollada y por ello lamentable,
se recubrió de escamas de reptil
y se ciñó al tobillo un cascabel frenético
(el de la danza no, el del exterminio)
y se volvió hacia todos, poseída
por un furor que tuvo a su alcance el instrumento
para ser eficaz, para destruir
lo tan penosamente atesorado.

Con los demás corrí despavorida
y vine a refugiarme al rincón más oscuro.

Hasta aquí los sirvientes y los intermediarios,
los traidores también de entre los míos,
me prendieron y a rastras me llevaron
hasta donde ella estab
y me ordenaron: cuenta lo que has visto.

Iba a llamarla Ménade,
iba a atarla de epítetos,
iba a finalizar mi relato diciendo
la frase de aquel criado de Job, el mensajero
narrador de desastre.

Pero no pude. Alguno
por encima del hombro me vigila
con ojos suspicaces;
me prohíbe que use figuras extranjeras
porque las menosprecia o las ignora
y recela una burla, una celada.
Ha descargado el látigo para hacerme saber
que no tengo atributos de juez y que mi oficio
es sólo de amanuense.

Y me dicta mentiras: vocablos desgastados
por el rumiar constante de la plebe.

Y continúo aquí, abyecta, la tarea
de repetir *grandeza, libertad, justicia, paz, amor, sabiduría*
y. . .y. . .no entiendo ya
este demente y torpe balbuceo.

Final Chronicle

When I reached the right age, the right conditions,
I was allowed the privilege.
I was invited to assist in an immemorial rite,
in that secret cult in which blood already
expired is renewed,
in which deities are revitalized,
in which the tree sprouts anew.

I entered the sacrificial temple
and saw the helpers of the head priest
scrape away the ancient, faded crusts
which stained the wall and the floor;
saw them polish the altar stone, returning it
to that perfect mirror which duplicates acts,
bestowing upon them a double wrath.

The witnesses, mute
(from fright,
or already out of some reverence?)
wait, trembling, with gaze fixed
on the so-called door of ridicule.

There the victim will appear.

Who will it be? I asked. And a noviate
answered me: they give her
many names and she is always the same.

Oh no! I cried. Pity! Because I felt
the tomb of my dead stirring,
the ashes of the hero dispersed,
the astronomer's vigil disturbed,
the dreamer's vision of the future interrupted;
the words which once congregated
around a true and beautiful order
now scattered and broken.

What insult will they create for this defenseless creature?

It's the only thing that changes, they indicated to me.
Nothing will be repeated which has not
been carried out another time.

The torn hymen was the feat
of a rough stallion, and from her we were born
you, me, us, those who we vouch for
and those who remain on the outside.

Afterward, the cripples arrived,
the dealers who would sell her
to the slave merchant.

She was plundered a thousand times, fettered
in damp prisons
struck down by some tumult, and by leaders
barbarously tender and fierce.

Who survives? No one more than she,
the indestructible. At each determined time
she descends to us and shows off,
always below a different mask,
in order to prove her legitimacy
and demand homage and tributes.

So there should be no fear.
The ceremonies will not be bloody.

Expectant, I watched her come: naked,
more, even more--skinned.
And without sight, without touch,
but as one who knows her path,
she went guided by no one, sustained
by no one, to a place
singular and prepared.

The head priest took her head
--not to cut it off--
but to pour on her ointments,
mixtures of the most savage herbs.

He said something in her ear, but I could not hear it. A spell,
something repeated and repeated
until it became obedience.

Afterward, my friends, I beg you,
do not doubt my language,
do not doubt the hand with which I write,
do not question that which I swear.

I saw the metamorphosis. Our lady,
stripped, and woeful for it,
covered herself in reptilian scales,
encircled one ankle with a frantic bell
(not for the dance, but for extermination)
and she turned toward us all, possessed
by a fury that had at its disposal the instrument
most effective in destroying
the things most painfully gathered.

With the others I ran, terrified,
and sought refuge in the most obscure corner.

Until here the servants and the intermediaries,
the traitors too among my people,
caught and dragged me
to where she was
and they ordered me: tell what you have seen.

I was to call her Maenad,
paralyze her with epithets,
I was to finish my story speaking
the phrase of Job's servant, the messenger
narrating disaster.

But I could not. Over my shoulder
someone watches me
with suspicious eyes;
prohibits me to use foreign phrases
because he despises or doesn't know them
and fears ridicule, a trap.
He has freed the whip so that I know
I am not able to judge, that my
trade is merely that of scribe.

And he dictates to me lies: words worn away
by the constant rumination of the masses.

And I continue here, wretched, the work
of repeating *grandeur, liberty, justice, peace, love, wisdom*
and. . .and. . .I no longer understand
this mad and awkward stammering.

Pasaporte

¿Mujer de ideas? No, nunca he tenido una.
Jamás repetí otras (por pudor o por fallas nemotécnicas).
¿Mujer de acción? Tampoco.
Basta mirar la talla de mis pies y mis manos.

Mujer, pues, de palabra. No, de palabra no.
Pero sí de palabras,
muchas, contradictorias, ay, insignificantes,
sonido puro, vacuo cernido de arabescos,
juego de salón, chisme, espuma, olvido.

Pero si es necesaria una definición
para el papel de identidad, apunte
que soy mujer de buenas intenciones
y que he pavimentado
un camino directo y fácil al infierno.

Passport

Woman of ideas? No, I've never had one.
I never repeated others (out of modesty or faulty memory).
Woman of action? No, not that either.
It's enough to look at the shape of my feet and hands.

Woman, well, of word. No, not of word.
But, yes, of words--
many, contradictory, oh, insignificant,
pure sound, sifted empty of arabesques,
a salon game, gossip, foam, oblivion.

But if a definition is necessary
for the identification card, note
that I am a woman of good intentions,
and that I have paved
a direct and simple route to hell.

Muro de lamentaciones

I.

Alguien que clama en vano contra el cielo:
la sorda inmensidad, la azul indiferencia,
el vacío imposible para el eco.
Porque los niños surgen de vientres como ataúdes
y en el pecho materno se nutren de venenos.
Porque la flor es breve y el tiempo interminable
y la tierra un cadáver transformándose
y el espanto la máscara perfecta de la nada.

Alguien, yo, arrodillada: rasgué mis vestiduras
y colmé de cenizas mi cabeza.
Lloro por esa patria que no he tenido nunca,
la patria que edifica la angustia en el desierto
cuando humean los granos de arena al mediodía.
Porque yo soy de aquellos desterrados
para quienes el pan de su mesa es ajeno
y su lecho una inmensa llanura abandonada
y toda voz humana una lengua extranjera.

Porque yo soy el éxodo.
(Un arcángel me cierra caminos de regreso
y su espada flamígera incendia paraísos.)
¡Más allá, más allá, más allá! ¡Sombras, fuentes,
praderas deleitosas, ciudades, más allá!
Más allá del camello y el ojo de la aguja,
de la humilde semilla de mostaza
y del lirio y del pájaro desnudos.

No podría tomar tu pecho por almohada
ni cabría en los pastos que triscan tus ovejas.

Reverbera mi hogar en el crepúsculo.

Yo dormiré en la Mano que quiebra los relojes.

II.

Detrás de mí tan sólo las memorias borradas.
Mis muertos ni trascienden de sus tumbas
y por primera vez estoy mirando el mundo.

Soy hija de mí misma.
De mi sueño nació. Mi sueño me sostiene.

No busquéis en mis filtros más que mi propia sangre
ni remontéis los ríos para alcanzar mi origen.

En mi genealogía no hay más que una palabra:
Soledad.

III.

Sedienta como el mar y como el mar ahogada
de agua salobre y honda
vengo desde el abismo hasta mis labios
que son como una torpe tentativa de playa,
como arena rendida
llorando por la fuga de las olas.

Todo mi mar es de pañuelos blancos,
de muelles desolados y de presencias náufragas.
Toda mi playa un caracol que gime
porque el viento encerrado en sus paredes
se revuelve furioso y lo golpea.

IV.

Antes acabarán mis pasos que el espacio.
Antes caerá la noche de que mi afán concluya.

Me cercarán las fieras en ronda enloquecida,
cercenarán mis voces cuchillos afilados,
se romperán los grillos que sujetan el miedo.

No prevalecerá sobre mí el enemigo
si en la tribulación digo Tu nombre.

V.

Entre las cosas busco Tu huella y no la encuentro.
Lo que mi oído toca se convierte en silencio,
la orilla en que me tiendo se deshace.

¿Dónde estás? ¿Por qué apartas tu rostro de mi rostro?
¿Eres la puerta enorme que esconde la locura,
el muro que devuelve lamento por lamento?

Esperanza,
¿eres sólo una lápida?

VI.

No diré con los otros que también me olvidaste.
No ingresaré en el coro de los que te desprecian
ni seguiré al ejército blasfemo.

Si no existes
yo te haré a semejanza de mi anhelo,
a imagen de mis ansias.

Llama petrificada
habitarás en mí como en tu reino.

VII.

Te amo hasta los límites extremos:
la yema palpitante de los dedos,
la punta vibratoria del cabello.

Creo en Ti con los párpados cerrados.
Creo en Tu fuego siempre renovado.

Mi corazón se ensancha por contener Tus ámbitos.

VIII.

Ha de ser tu substancia igual que la del día
que sigue a las tinieblas, radiante y absoluto.
Como lluvia, la gracia prometida
descenderá en escalas luminosas
a bañar la aridez de nuestra frente.

Pues ¿para qué esta fiebre si no es para anunciarte?

Carbones encendidos han limpiado mi boca.

Canto tus alabanzas desde antes que amanezca.

Wailing Wall

I.

Someone who clamours in vain against the sky:
the deaf immensity, the blue indifference,
the void impossible for even an echo.
Because children arise from bellies like coffins
and are nurtured on poison at the maternal breast.
Because the flower is brief, time interminable,
the earth a cadaver transformed,
and fright the perfect mask for nothing.

Someone, me, kneeling: I tore my clothing
and my head overflowed with ashes.
I cry for that country which I have never had,
the country that builds anguish in the desert
when grains of sand steam at noon.
Because I am one of those exiled
for whom the bread on the table does not belong
their milk an immense abandoned plain
and all human voice a foreign language.

Because I am the exodus.
(An archangel closes the return paths against me;
his flamboyant sword incinerates paradises.)
Far away! Far away! Far away! Shadows, fountains,
delightful meadows, cities--even further away!
Far from the camel and the eye of the needle,
from the humble mustard seed,
the stripped iris and naked birds.

I could not use your breast as a pillow,
nor could I fit into the pastures where your sheep mingle.

In the twilight, my hearth shimmers.

I will sleep in the Hand which smashes clocks.

II.

Behind me only rough memories.
Even my dead do not go beyond their graves
and for the first time I am seeing the world.

I am my own child.
I was born of my dream. My dream sustains me.

Do not search my veins for more than my own blood,
nor navigate rivers to find my origins.

In my genealogy there is no more than one word:
Solitude.

III.

Thirsty, like the sea, and like the sea, drowned
in deep salt water,
I rise from the abyss as far as my lips
which are like the awkward, tentative attempt of a beach,
like sand betrayed
crying as the waves escape.

All my sea is of white scarves,
of desolate wharves and shipwrecked presences.
All my beach, a snail wailing
because the wind enclosed in its walls
revolves furiously, striking it.

IV.

My passage will finish sooner than space.
Night will fall before my toil will end.

Wild animals will surround me in a maddened patrol,
my voices will be trimmed by sharpened knives,
the fetters which subdue fright will be smashed.

My enemy will not prevail against me
if, in time of trial, I speak Your name.